

SENATOR LABEDZ: I still am very hesitant to support LB 64. I think it is an administrative program that should be decided, not by the Legislature, but by the administration and I don't think that we should combine the two under one program inasmuch as Senator Landis himself said, there were two hundred fifty locations but as far as he knows, they are just the nutrition sites, the senior citizen programs that are in the...I imagine they come from the Office on Aging. Those people are invited to come in and speak on weatherization or speak on energy assistance but they are not available at all times. Any time that any low income or the elderly have a problem with paying their utilities can go directly to the Department of Welfare rather than trying to find someone that they can contact through the Department of Energy, especially in the rural areas.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Your time is up.

SENATOR LABEDZ: I don't think they would have a problem in the City of Omaha as much as they would in the rural areas. I will not and cannot support LB 64.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I would support LB 64 and use this to make a couple of points, I guess, about some other legislation in the general area of energy. As you know, I have been very interested in it. We have about \$18 million which comes into this state from the federal government in terms of a low income energy assistance block grant. Of that amount, \$14 million goes to heating assistance and about \$1.6 million goes to what is called Title XX programs. That is welfare programs. That is authorized under the federal government. A certain percentage of your energy assistance is able to be diverted to other assistance programs and that is exactly what is done. About \$800,000 is used for administration. About a million dollars goes for home weatherization and then there is miscellaneous monies that go several different places. That is how that \$18 million is spent. Then we have another block grant. It is called a weatherization block grant and that is about \$3 million. So you have \$3 million there and another \$1 million from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program going to home weatherization. The point that I think I am trying...I think you should try and understand what Senator Landis talked about, is that it is very important to keep these two programs linked together, that they are two programs that have the same focal point in that they both deal with the problem of low income energy assistance and it seems as though I think our priorities may be backwards in terms of \$8 million from the federal